U.S. Department of Education 2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

A Public School

School Type (Public Schools):				
(Check all that apply, if any)	Charter	Title 1	Magnet	Choice
Name of Principal: Mr. Rob Po	<u>edersen</u>			
Official School Name: Plenty	wood Schoo	<u>ol</u>		
· ·	100 East La Plentywood	<u>urel</u> , MT 59254-169	<u>97</u>	
County: Sheridan	State Schoo	l Code Number:	1070	
Telephone: (406) 765-1803	E-mail: <u>be</u> :	nnej@plentywo	od.k12.mt.us	
Fax: (406) 765-1195	Web URL:	www.plentywo	ood.k12.mt.us	
I have reviewed the information - Eligibility Certification), and				ity requirements on page 2 (Part I II information is accurate.
				Date
(Principal's Signature)				
Name of Superintendent*: Mr.	Joe Bennett	<u>t</u> Superintende	ent e-mail: <u>ben</u>	nej@plentywood.k12.mt.us
District Name: Plentywood K-	12 Schools	District Phone:	(406) 765-18	<u>03</u>
I have reviewed the information - Eligibility Certification), and			-	ity requirements on page 2 (Part I t is accurate.
				Date
(Superintendent's Signature)				
Name of School Board Preside	nt/Chairpers	son: Mr. Terry A	Angvick	
I have reviewed the information - Eligibility Certification), and				ity requirements on page 2 (Part I t is accurate.
				Date
(School Board President's/Cha	irperson's S	signature)		

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

^{*}Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

- 1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
- 2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
- 3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2010-2011 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
- 4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
- 5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2005.
- 6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
- 7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
- 8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
- 9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
- 10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district:	1 Elementary schools
(per district designation)	0 Middle/Junior high schools
	0 High schools
	0 K-12 schools
	1 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure:	8800

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- 3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
- 4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: ____3
- 5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	16	13	29
K	11	18	29		7	0	0	0
1	11	16	27		8	0	0	0
2	10	7	17		9	0	0	0
3	7	7	14		10	0	0	0
4	18	9	27		11	0	0	0
5	12	6	18		12	0	0	0
	Total in Applying School: 161							161

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:	5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
	2 % Asian
	0 % Black or African American
	11 % Hispanic or Latino
	0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
	76 % White
	6 % Two or more races
-	100 % Total
-	

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 9%
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	7
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	7
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	14
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	163
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.09
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	9

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school:	0%
Total number of limited English proficient students in the school:	0
Number of languages represented, not including English:	0
Specify languages:	

9.	Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals:	489
	Total number of students who qualify:	7
	If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-	
	income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals	
	program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.	

10. Percent of students receiving special education services:

20%

Total number of students served:

32

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

3 Autism	1 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	4 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	7 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	14 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
1 Mental Retardation	O Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0 Multiple Disabilities	2 Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

Number of Staff

	<u>Full-Time</u>	Part-Time
Administrator(s)	2	0
Classroom teachers	13	0
Special resource teachers/specialists	1	1
Paraprofessionals	4	0
Support staff	0	0
Total number	20	1
·		

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

13:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	95%	94%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	99%	98%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	%
Enrolled in a community college	 %
Enrolled in vocational training	 %
Found employment	 %
Military service	 %
Other	 %
Total	0%

Plentywood School K-6, Plentywood, Montana is a center for educational excellence and integrity. Located in the northeast corner of the Big Sky State, Plentywood is a small rural community with a population of approximately 1,750. The area is in the Great Plains region of North America with rolling plains and hills. The climate normally features extreme summers and winters, with mild springs and falls. The nearest city with a population of more than 100,000 is Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, approximately 110 miles to the north. The Plentywood community was founded in 1912 near the Big Muddy River. Plentywood is the county seat of Sheridan County. Plentywood has served as a trading post for the people living in that part of the state. Plentywood's commerce centers on the family farm and ranch. Recently the economy has been boosted by oil exploration. At the site of present-day Plentywood, Sitting Bull and his Sioux people surrendered to the U.S. Army after living in Canada for five years. The Outlaw Trail crossed into Canada north of Plentywood. Rustlers moved their stolen cattle and horses along this passage across the border. Butch Cassidy named the trail and established a rest station in the Big Muddy Valley west of Plentywood. Plentywood is home to the largest high school in Sheridan County. A new school building was constructed on the previous site after a fire destroyed most of the original building in the early 1990's. The Plentywood K-12 school district has an elementary, middle, and high school all located in town. The district enrollment has shown a steady decline over the last five years. Plentywood is classified as a Class B school district for participation in the Montana High School Association activities program.

Fully accredited by the State of Montana and the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) since 1924, Plentywood Schools are noted for their fine academic programs, up-to-date technology and textbooks, and an excellent faculty. Plentywood School 7-8 was selected by the U.S. Department of Education in 2003 to receive the No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School Award. The Plentywood school system is well known in the area for the high standards that are set for the students and staff in academic proficiency. The students tend to test high on standardized assessments, which is a true reflection of the dedication of the seasoned faculty. The students participate readily in academic competitions throughout the year and compete strongly against the larger schools of Montana. Numerous co-curricular activities are also available to aid the school in providing well-rounded individuals for the rest of their scholastic career and the real world for their future. Plentywood High School's graduation rate ranks among the highest in the state and professional institutions speak highly of the graduates after they employ them.

Plentywood's elementary faculty is extremely strong in pedagogical experience. A true team concept exists between the staff. Collegiality is an evident characteristic in every sense of the word. Sharing is a daily occurrence among these professionals, and they are very caring about the success of each student they have the pleasure to grace their classrooms. They truly encompass our school's mission statement, which is: Plentywood Schools in partnership with the community will nurture, support, and welcome the needs of all students. Teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members will share in the responsibility for providing a supportive, safe environment where respect for self and others is paramount. The school and community recognize the diversity of our students and their uniquely individual intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs. All students will be engaged in the educational process, and participate in real life experiences to gain knowledge, wisdom, confidence, and an appreciation and ability for lifelong learning, as they strive to maximize their individual potential.

1. Assessment Results:

It should be noted that Plentywood School is part of a district with a fairly small enrollment and a change in the results for a small number of students can have a substantial effect on the overall percentage of proficiency. As a result of these relatively small test groups, the test scores do reflect from year to year the inconsistencies and the unreliability inherent with all small group testing outcomes. Also, due to student numbers, there are times when the numbers of students in many of the subgroups are not at the level required by the committee to be included in the report. This lack of numbers does make it difficult to evaluate the scoring trends for subgroups over the particular five year period required of the committee. Even our largest subgroup, the socio/economic disadvantaged students, is affected by this lack of numbers from time to time when examining them at separate grade levels. Despite these circumstances, when reviewing our students' test results over the past five years, first as a school on the whole and then by grade, certain performance trends can be found and analyzed in order to determine the achievement of the students.

Essentially the testing process has been developed using specific criteria based on a set of Montana educational standards with the intent to measure each student's achievement versus that criterion and the state standards. There are four levels of outcome for each student – novice, nearing proficiency, proficient, and advanced. On an annual basis, each school and school district must have a specific percentage of students score at the proficient or advanced levels to meet the standard for Adequate Yearly Progress. For the 2010 testing the required number of students who needed to test at or above the level of proficiency for each school was 83% in Reading and 68% in Math.

When all the results of all the students tested in Plentywood School (grades 3-6) are combined each year for the school from 2006 to 2010, the results show Reading scores have been consistently very high. Reading proficiency for the school is currently at 91%. When evaluating the information over time, we found that the number of students reading at a proficient level in the school has risen 5% over the last five years, and the level of advanced readers has increased dramatically by 22% over the same five year period. In addition, reading proficiency of economically disadvantaged students is 89% compared to the all student group at 91%. These results of reading proficiency compare to the state target of 83%.

When all the results of all the students tested in Plentywood School (grades 3-6) are combined each year for the school from 2006 to 2010, the results show Math scores have increased 10% over the last five years and are now well above the state target. Math proficiency for the school is currently at 80%. When evaluating the information over time, we found that the number of students reading at a proficient level in the school has risen 10% over the last five years, and the level of advanced proficiency has increased by 15% over the same five year period. Math proficiency of economically disadvantaged students is 78% compared to the all student group at 80%. These results of Math proficiency compare to the state target of 68%.

When examining the test data on a grade level by grade level basis beginning with the initial testing in third grade up through grade six, several trends are evident. First, the scores of the first year of testing for each new third grade class have increased significantly from 45% of the students being assessed as proficient to 80% proficiency level in Math and from 90% to 96% in Reading for the five years in review. These results show that as the Plentywood School staff and students have become more familiar with the testing and the expectations the school has reviewed and modified the curriculum and instruction to ensure alignment with the state of Montana standards.

Secondly, upon examination of the data from a longitudinal perspective for grades five and six, there is a clear trend of steady improvement each year of the students' test scores as they progress from grades 3 through 6. Though there are a few instances where progress slows or stalls, this continuous improvement

of proficiency is obvious and has occurred in all of the grades as well as in the subgroup of the economically/socially disadvantaged students.

Thirdly, a very significant trend is easily identified regarding the test data for the Plentywood School's socio/economically disadvantaged students. The test scores for the students in this subgroup are consistently on par with the all students and even in a few cases the percentage of proficient students has actually been higher than the numbers for all students.

Listed below are the website URL's where the state of Montana student assessment information can be found.

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data/Index.html

 $\underline{http://iservices.measuredprogress.org/Default.asp?ProgramID=11\&submit1=Enter}$

2. Using Assessment Results:

The use of assessment data is a key component in the process of evaluating and understanding student performance and is the foundation in the continuous effort to promote improvement student achievement in Plentywood School. From the school's staff perspective there is a strong belief that most decisions in regard to school improvement are data driven. As a result, the use of data in the district and schools has changed instructional practices by informing teachers about curricular areas and/or specific skills that students have mastered or need additional work to master. Teachers analyze data to see where student achievement gaps are occurring in order to adjust instruction or curriculum to meet student needs. The school data analysis clearly shows that the use of data to modify instructional practices is making a difference in student academic progress and student proficiency as measured by the CRT test. The use of data has enabled school students to make significant progress in reading (5% Proficiency & 22% increase in advanced status, over the last 5 years), in math (10% progress over the last 5 years). Specific areas that will improve based on the data include student knowledge and skills in solving math and reading constructed response questions. The district will use reading instruction to teach and improve student written open response skills such as summarizing, explaining, and using information from a passage to support one's position. In addition, teachers are incorporating multiple choice and constructed response practice/test taking strategies in math instruction along with specific steps in solving word or practical application problems.

The end result is that student proficiency in completing constructed response and open response type questions in reading and math has and will continue to improve. Data has clearly changed instructional practices in the district as shown by the continued improvement of overall proficiency in reading and math and the current high rate of proficiency in the district.

In addition, assessment data has also been utilized in terms of Plentywood's curriculum development and revision. We are constantly looking for voids and redundancies in the curriculum that sometimes is magnified by assessment data. Supplements to the curriculum mainly are given to them because of notification in a lower data score from their students on a given year.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

It is the common belief at Plentywood School K-6 that communication is key to student success and it is just as important to share these successes with the public whenever possible. The School provides its parents and students especially with a lot of information and feedback on various academic, behavioral, and social progress assessments at the school. The School does this through phone conversations, individual student meetings, individual parent/student meetings, parent-teacher conferences, mid-term progress reports, and quarterly report cards. Assessment data is also mailed home to each parent/guardian to peruse and the teachers or guidance counselors make it a point to explain this data at the various conferences or mailings that occur each year. Plentywood School K-6 feels that it is not only important to

communicate areas of concern with specific parents and students, but also feels it is vital to share successes with them as well.

The Plentywood community has local media resources at its disposal. Plentywood has a local newspaper and radio station that is utilized most regularly to broadcast positive student group performances in various curricular and co-curricular areas. Plentywood School teachers also deliver successes individually with parents through mailings, phone calls, or notes home with the students each day. The School also utilizes a school-wide "Daily Bulletin" that is read each day in all of the classes. Announcements which include student successes are commonly given in this bulletin.

Assessment data is mailed home to each parent-guardian as stated previously. The District Superintendent also provides and distributes to the public and the school board a school district "report card" which portrays to the public how each school has performed in the annual state assessments. The School Principal also has a bi-weekly radio show where they deliver their "Principal's Report" to the community in which concerns and successes are shared with the public. The School Principal also has a "Student Spotlight" section in the local newspaper where students who are exhibiting positive academic and behavioral successes are publicized.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

While Plentywood School is by no means a large school in terms of enrollment, they are actually much bigger in terms of the area. They are the largest school in the county and rank as one of the largest schools in the two counties that border theirs. Because of this, Plentywood Schools are looked upon as an education leader in the northeast corner of the state. Plentywood School also has an enviable reputation for having high standards for their students and faculty.

Plentywood often hosts county or even tri-county wide in-services for area teachers that are led by outside professionals or even their own qualified staff. They feel that professional development is of the utmost importance to school improvement. Plentywood also believes that there is no reason for not sharing this process with other schools to make education better in the whole area of the state. Plentywood's school is one of the nicest facilities in the area so it is extremely adequate for hosting many schools for these type of activities.

Without being perceived as arrogant, Plentywood School K-6 has had a lot of success to share with other schools over the years. The school is often held as a "measuring stick" by other area schools. Students transferring in from other schools, whether it be in or out of state, are generally behind in terms of mathematics and reading levels in comparison to our students.

Plentywood School's principal belongs to both national and state professional organizations, NASSP, NAESP, MASSP, and MAEMSP. The principal is active in all organizations and has held leadership positions. In regional meetings the principal often shares successes with his colleagues and is often asked for advice from his fellow principals. Plentywood School is held in high regard among the state organizations.

Plentywood's principal has recently served as a site evaluation coordinator for a neighboring school. In this capacity the principal put a team together to conduct an accreditation check for the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools upon request by the nearby school district. This request was a direct result from the prestige that is held for Plentywood Schools. The principal met with students, administrators, faculty, community members, and school board members to assess the quality of education in their system and to offer guidance in areas of concern. The principal has also served on the School Administrator's of Montana (SAM) delegate assembly which reflects his standing in the state association.

Plentywood School's superintendent also belongs to both national and state professional organizations, AASA, MASS, and NEMASS. The superintendent is often looked to for sage wisdom and advice to assist in problems in other neighboring school systems.

Plentywood's superintendent has been an occasional mentor and/or supervisor to young teachers and administrators in the area. This has either been upon request of members of the Montana University System or from specific request from said young administrators. Often these requests are a direct result of what has been accomplished at Plentywood Schools in his tenure.

One of Plentywood's school board members has also had a tenure as a delegate for the Montana School Board Association assembly which reflects the outlook of the school and he as an individual board member.

If Plentywood School was fortunate enough to be chosen as a Blue Ribbon School, they will most likely be looked upon to provide more opportunities to provide sharing occasions with other schools.

1. Curriculum:

Even though Plentywood's enrollment is in a decreasing process, the school district has worked diligently to keep their curriculum rich and full of a variety of opportunities for their students. They believe that a well-rounded curriculum will provide their school with well-rounded graduates able to compete well in a world with other students. This occasionally requires their staff to utilize all of their talents in doing so.

In the area of mathematics, the Saxon Mathematics program is utilized. In the primary grades K-2, students are exposed to numbers, patterns, measurements, time, basic geometric designs and shapes, graphs, estimates, place values, and problem solving. Fractions, multiplication, and division are introduced as well in Grade 2. In the intermediate grades 3-6, the same concepts that were introduced in the primary level are covered for students to become proficient in and are expanded on. Fractions, multiplication, and division, along with decimals, data collection, and geometric concepts are studied in detail. Algebraic concepts are also introduced at this level.

The science curriculum for Plentywood Elementary is guided with Harcourt Science Program (HSP). The science instruction is just touched upon briefly in Kindergarten informally. The science curriculum for the rest of the primary levels 1-2 covers topics in detail such as parts of plants and animals, seasons, senses, life cycles, food groups, sound, and matter. The solar system is also introduced at the end of 2nd grade. In the intermediate grades 3-6 topics such as water, nutrition, body systems, animal groups, ecosystems, force and energy, machines, and the solar system are studied in-depth. Cell structure is introduced and studied as well.

Story Town is a program through Harcourt Publishers that is used for Plentywood Elementary's language arts curriculum. Children's literature at all levels is studied with reading abilities taken into account. Different genres of literary work are exposed to the students. The basic reading concepts of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing are blended in all grade levels to different degrees.

Harcourt's social studies program is also utilized as a guide for our curriculum in this area. At the primary level grades K-2, citizenship, holidays, family, basic geography skills, and community are learned about. The 3rd grade curriculum is solely based on community and all that it encompasses. Students in 4th grade study the United States, its geography, its regions, and its cultures. 5th grade takes a look at U.S. History at an introductory level. 6th grade investigates world geography, history, and cultures on an introductory level.

Plentywood Elementary School's faculty delivers the instruction across the curriculum in a specific manner: 1) Direct Instruction - They tell students about a strategy in a clear and explicit manner, 2) Modeling - They show students how to use the strategy by "thinking aloud," 3) Guided Practice - They guide, assist, and provide feedback to students as they practice using the strategy, and 4) Application - Students practice using the strategy, with support from the teachers, until they can use it independently. Concepts are introduced at the primary level and students are expected to become proficient and master, in most cases, various facts by the intermediate level. It is important to the faculty to keep students engaged throughout the day without much "down time." Plentywood's curriculum is tied to the Montana and national standards and is in constant review locally and through the involvement with the Prairie View Curriculum Consortium (PVCC).

Plentywood Elementary School students are exposed to visual and performing arts in a variety of ways. Dance is covered in our health enhancement and music curriculum. In physical education our students apply the elements of space, pattern, form, rhythm, and movement in dance. Social, traditional, ethnic, and contemporary dance are exposed in physical education and music curricula. Music is exposed across

the curriculum in a variety of ways but it is explored in depth in our music classes. Students here apply the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, tone, phrasing, and tempo. They perform vocal and instrumental solos or ensembles in local concerts or district competitions. Ethnic, folk, classical, popular, and jazz music is exposed to the students. Our school doesn't have a formal theatre program but our students are given opportunities through the Missoula Children's Theater, the University of Montana Repertory Theater, and the school play. Students are also asked to act and perform across the curriculum in various projects. In terms of visual arts, our Art curriculum asks students to apply elements of line, shape, form, color, space, value and texture in their work. They apply two-dimensional processes in paintings and drawings and apply three-dimensional processes in sculptures and clay work.

Our health enhancement curriculum at Plentywood Elementary School encompasses physical education, health education, and nutrition education. Our students earn a basic knowledge of concepts that promote comprehensive health. They learn to demonstrate competency in a variety of movement forms and apply these concepts and principles while learning and developing motor skills. They achieve and maintain a challenging level of health-related physical fitness and they demonstrate health-enhancing behaviors through education on a variety of topics, including nutrition.

2. Reading/English:

Plentywood Elementary School went to a school wide language arts curriculum in 2005 as it was becoming apparent that there were inconsistencies among the different age levels. Through a committee and a collective process, the faculty chose to utilize the *Story Town* program from Harcourt School Publishers. We have found this program very beneficial to our needs and have been using it since.

Story Town is a research-based, developmental reading and language arts program for pre-kindergarten through the sixth grade. The foundation of the program is the high quality children's literature, as well as informational texts. Through the student textbooks, the students are exposed to a variety of genres. Story Town reflects current, confirmed research and prioritizes and sequences essential skills and strategies into a clear, organized model for instruction. Story Town features an organized, direct approach to teaching reading. The program emphasizes explicit, systematic instruction in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. Following instruction, the program provides ample practice and application of these skills, using a variety of meaningful tools and activities suited to different types of learners and classroom settings to reinforce instruction and learning.

The instruction that our teachers utilize with the *Story Town* program is clear, straightforward, and logically sequenced. The objective and explanation are directly stated by our teachers. They follow four basic steps: 1) Direct Instruction - They tell students about a strategy in a clear and explicit manner, 2) Modeling - They show students how to use the strategy by "thinking aloud," 3) Guided Practice - They guide, assist, and provide feedback to students during their reading as they practice using the strategy, and 4) Application - Students practice using the strategy, with support from our teachers, until they can use it independently.

Plentywood Elementary School also started a Response to Intervention (RtI) program in 2007 to help identify and improve the reading skills of students who read below grade level. Our school utilizes DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) testing on a constant basis to assess each of our students' reading skill level to see how they are progressing. We put our students into reading leveled groups to best serve their needs whether they are in the strategic, intensive, or benchmark areas. Plentywood Elementary School also has a Title I program and a Special Education program that provides additional support for those students who identified with need.

3. Mathematics:

Similar to our language arts curriculum, our mathematics program had a major overhaul in the past decade. The faculty felt that the old mathematics program had not met the needs of our struggling students in this area. It was decided to switch school wide to the Saxon mathematics program by Saxon

Publishers, Inc. It was felt that Saxon provides more stability and more of a routine that struggling learners seem to flourish better in.

In the primary grades, Saxon's mathematics series is a hands-on, success-oriented series that emphasizes manipulatives and mental math. The series addresses the multisensory approach to teaching and is designed for heterogeneously grouped children. It is felt that by using the Saxon program it will enable all children to develop a solid foundation in the language and basic concepts of mathematics.

We have found that mastery of mathematical concepts does not occur quickly. Mastery and long-term retention require that the concepts be practiced over a long period of time. In each Saxon program, concepts are presented in carefully sequenced small increments. New objectives are introduced through carefully selected group activities, and all concepts are practiced in each succeeding lesson. All areas of mathematics are integrated so that students see the interrelationships. Thus concepts are not presented in chapters but are gently introduced over a considerable period of time.

The Saxon program also has an intervention program that can be used with any student who is struggling and performing below grade level. Plentywood Elementary School also has a Title I program and a Special Education program that provides that additional support for students that have been identified with need.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Plentywood Elementary School utilizes the HSP Science program from Harcourt School Publishers. We feel that this program gives our students the resources to promote scientific literacy by nurturing a lifelong fascination with the natural world. Physical science, life science, earth & space science, science in personal and social perspectives, and the history and nature of science are areas that the HSP Science program delves into in correlation to the National Science Education Standards and to our state standards as well. Most of the concepts are introduced in an age-appropriate fashion and eventually those that are tied to the standards are asked to be mastered as the students move through the program over time. We also like the fact that the program has correlations with our *Story Town* reading/language arts program as well.

Through the HSP Science program, our faculty feels that we are providing our students with the following:

- They investigate and learn science concepts and experience success in this area.
- They develop knowledge of and the ability to use the tools, skills, and methods of scientific inquiry.
- They have the opportunity to build success in other curricular areas.
- They are assessed fairly and consistently based on their competence in science concepts and processes.
- They learn about the history and nature of science.

Another thing that our teachers appreciate about the program are the teacher materials that provide numerous ways to differentiate instruction each unit and keep in tune with learners at a wide array of abilities. ESL Support, Science Leveled Readers, Audio Texts, and HSP Science eBooks are a few of the devices that are used by our teachers to make this happen. Various means of assessment such as formal assessments, standardized test preparation, online assessments, ongoing assessments, performance assessments, student self-assessments, and portfolio assessments are given for the teacher to choose from. Addressing the needs of all students is right in line with our school's mission. Lifelong learning and real life learning experiences are also in our mission and inherent in our science curriculum. Allusions to the real world, applications to the real world, and hands on lab activities not only meet this goal but also motivate our students to succeed.

5. Instructional Methods:

Differentiated instruction occurs on a daily basis in our school. Our teachers have become versed in working with learners of all levels within core instructional time and also intervention time. Most of our staff has received professional development instruction to learn more about strategies on working with students of all abilities. Regardless of the subject, our staff understands that curriculum and instruction must be carefully planned to provide for students who need different levels of intervention at different times. At least three levels of intervention are considered commonly; extra support, strategic intervention, or intensive intervention.

With extra support, our teachers constantly monitor which students need extra help and then provide support before students fall behind. In terms of strategic intervention, our teachers sometimes have to pull students in as individuals or as groups to work with during their recess or down time. Our Title I program also provides strategic intervention to those students struggling in the areas of mathematics or reading. When strategic intervention falls short, a more intensive approach must be considered. This is usually the point in which our students who qualify with a specific learning disability enter our Special Education program and receive assistance in our Resource Room.

For students who already meet or exceed grade-level expectations, our teachers understand the importance of providing them with opportunities for enrichment or acceleration. Some examples of how our teachers meet the needs of our advanced students are requiring them to read more advanced books as measured through our STAR reading assessments and our Accelerated Reader programs, by asking them higher-level questions to get them to make connections, synthesize information, and form valid judgments, and by providing these students with more investigative independent projects.

Our Response to Intervention (RtI) program is another great example of differentiated instruction in terms of reading. Leveled ability groups and meeting their specific needs in a succinct fashion has been hugely successful in our school and this has shown on standardized testing. An example of differentiated instruction utilized by many of our teachers in the classroom setting has been cooperative learning opportunities. Often advanced learners are paired with struggling learners and that mutual aid experience has been most worthwhile.

6. Professional Development:

Professional development is extremely vital in the success of Plentywood School. The Plentywood School District's planned professional development goals for the most recent school terms include: 1) assessment in-service, 2) RTI introduction/training, 3) technology integration practices for staff members, 4) in-service on instructional strategies for the individual learner in math and reading, and 5) an in-service on Indian Education for All. Due to the size and location of our district/school it is difficult to sponsor professional development training on site for all staff, though we are usually able to secure at least one formal in-service event per year for the District staff. However, the bulk of activities are implemented through individual/group training through Prairie View Curriculum Consortium, conventions, centrally located workshops, teacher mentoring, and in district training provided by our school personnel. It is common to send an individual to training and having them return to the school and train the remainder of the staff in that particular area or topic.

The professional development needed to support the identified strategies to improve student CRT math /reading scores includes assessment training, technology training, and MARS training and applications. The training/review required for staff on using and developing rubrics for use in classroom assessments depends on the specific assessments selected for each area and the individual's expertise in assessments. Further training on assessment is determined on an individual basis and will include staff training throughout the year depending on the schedule and availability of workshops in the area.

The teaching staffs' formal professional development plan is based on a three year rotation consisting of formal evaluation, a professional portfolio, and a professional growth project. The administrative team is

in constant observation of their staff. They conduct two formal evaluations of their non-tenured staff and one formal evaluation of their tenured staff during the formal evaluation year as well as several informal evaluations throughout the school year. Plentywood's evaluation process is goal-oriented in terms of providing positive feedback and constructive alternatives for the staff to improve their instructional techniques. During the cycle of the construction of the professional portfolio, the staff is provided with a number of proven professional development strategies as well as activities that can improve student achievement. Teachers are required to select a minimum number of these possible activities and provide evidence in their portfolio to demonstrate their involvement in each particular professional growth opportunity. For the professional growth project of the cycle teachers are asked to develop a yearlong project requiring them to develop or utilize instructional or teaching methodology which they have not previously used extensively. They then document their efforts and the results of the project based on student achievement and success.

The Plentywood district and schools has committed to a continuous school improvement cycle utilizing multiple components. The district components include collecting and analyzing data, setting five year plan goals based on the conclusions drawn from the data, determining specific yearly action plans based on certain five year plan goals, utilizing effective and research based instructional techniques in yearly strategies, implementation of yearly action plans, and monitoring and assessment of yearly action plan progress. Integrated into the continuous school improvement cycle is the necessary professional development needed to effectively achieve the yearly action plan goals.

7. School Leadership:

In terms of structure, our school has two administrators who oversee the staff and students of Plentywood Elementary School. Our superintendent has been in his position now for going on nine years although he has served the District for over thirty years in various capacities. The principal has been in the District for eleven years, three of which has been as the elementary principal.

The school leadership is one of shared decision making whether it be between the two administrators or with the faculty. Professionalism is quite prevalent in the school system between the staff. A heavy ingredient of collegiality also exists among the teachers. Student achievement is the driving force for all of the staff and administration. It is the sole focus. The current administration has led a reformation of sorts in terms of restructuring the school's curriculum, leading a change from individual instruction systems to a comprehensive school wide approach in the areas of mathematics and reading. Programs such as the Response to Intervention (RtI), anti-bullying initiatives, student incentives programs, etc. have been led by the current administrators.

The role of the principal in the Plentywood School system is widespread. The principal is responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining an effective learning climate.
- Supervising the school's educational program.
- Assuming responsibility for the implementation and observance of all District policies and regulations.
- Assisting in the development, revision, and evaluation of the curriculum and school class schedules.
- Maintaining high standards of student conduct and enforcing discipline as necessary.
- Conducting meetings of the staff as necessary for the proper functioning of the school.
- Orienting newly assigned staff members regarding their individual and collective performance.
- Preparing and supervising the preparation of reports, records, lists, and all other paperwork appropriate for the school's functioning.
- Keeping abreast of changes and developments in the profession by attending meetings, reading journals, and discussing items of interest with colleagues.
- Attending special events, activities, and functions of the school.

- Maintaining relationships with local community groups and individuals to foster understanding and solicit support for overall school programs.
- Assists in recruiting, screening, training, assigning, and evaluating the school's professional staff.

Some examples of how the principal of Plentywood Elementary School leads in improving student achievement are by publicizing student successes through the local newspaper or his biweekly radio show, visiting classrooms on a regular basis, being visible during transition times, being present at school activities during and after the school day, conducting regular staff meetings, leading regular Response to Intervention (RtI) planning team meetings, providing on-going evaluation and advice to faculty, providing on-going leadership in curriculum development and revision, attending staff and administrative professional development opportunities as they arise, sponsoring a "Student Spotlight" program with the local newspaper, sponsoring a "CAT Ticket" student incentive program, sponsoring a B.U.G. (Bring Up Grades) Club program, sponsoring a "Staff Stars" faculty recognition program with the local newspaper, and sponsoring a positive behavior student recognition program, just to name a few.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Montana Criterion-Referenced Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Measured Progress

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient & advanced	80	60	62	61	45
advanced	52	10	17	15	25
Number of students tested	25	19	28	26	20
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	4	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
Proficient & advanced	75		61		34
advanced	33		15		17
Number of students tested	12		13		12
2. African American Students					
Proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					<u>-</u>
Proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Montana Criterion-Referenced Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Measured Progress

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient & advanced	96	80	90	85	90
advanced	56	15	31	35	45
Number of students tested	25	19	28	26	20
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	4	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced	92		85		91
advanced	25		31		33
Number of students tested	12		13		12
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 4 Test: Montana Criterion-Referenced Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Measured Progress

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient & advanced	60	61	81	65	79
advanced	15	29	48	20	18
Number of students tested	20	31	28	20	33
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	3	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced	60	61		70	
advanced	0	23		30	
Number of students tested	10	13		10	
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					-

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Montana Criterion-Referenced Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-20010 Publisher: Measured Progress

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient & advanced	80	87	85	85	85
advanced	30	42	37	20	24
Number of students tested	20	31	28	20	33
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	3	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES				<u> </u>	
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced	80	77		80	
advanced	20	23		10	
Number of students tested	10	13		10	
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: Montana Criterion-Referenced Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Measured Progress

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient & advanced	83	88	67	63	86
advanced	33	36	17	37	19
Number of students tested	30	25	18	35	27
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	4
SUBGROUP SCORES					<u>-</u>
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced	82				82
advanced	18				18
Number of students tested	11				10
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Montana Criterion-Referenced Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Measured Progress

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient & advanced	97	88	83	94	97
advanced	57	56	61	57	19
Number of students tested	30	25	18	35	27
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	4
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced	100				91
advanced	36				18
Number of students tested	11				10
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 6 Test: Montana Criterion-Referenced Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Measured Progress

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient & advanced	93	59	73	90	84
advanced	56	47	29	23	35
Number of students tested	24	17	34	30	37
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	3	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced				79	69
advanced				29	15
Number of students tested				13	13
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:			ı	1	

Subject: Reading Grade: 6 Test: Montana Criterion-Referenced Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Measured Progress

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient & advanced	89	89	88	97	84
advanced	70	65	59	30	38
Number of students tested	24	17	34	30	37
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	3	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced				93	77
advanced				29	31
Number of students tested				13	13
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES		<u> </u>	<u> </u>		·
proficient & advanced	80	68	72	70	70
advanced	40	30	29	25	25
Number of students tested	99	92	108	111	117
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced	78	62	61	63	58
advanced	23	21	14	25	14
Number of students tested	42	34	36	49	42
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

Subject: Reading Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
proficient & advanced	91	86	87	91	86
advanced	55	44	46	38	33
Number of students tested	99	92	108	111	117
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
proficient & advanced	89	85	75	86	81
advanced	34	26	39	28	26
Number of students tested	42	34	36	49	42
2. African American Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					·
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
proficient & advanced					
advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					